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P 291800Z AUG 80
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 129

DS

LIMITED OFICIAL USE SAN SALVADOR 5994

E.O. 12065: NA
TAGS: PINT SHUM ES
SUBJ: LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN MCHUGH

REF STATE 222756

1. FOLLOWING ARE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN FIRST AND SECOND PARAGRAPHS:
TO DATE SALVADORAN AUTHORITIES HAVE CONTRACTED FOR THE DELIVERY OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE VALUED AT $2,256,724. THE AMOUNT DELIVERED IS $767,983.35. A BREAKDOWN OF THE FORMER FIGURE AND PARTIAL BREAKDOWN OF THE LATTTER FIGURE ARE GIVEN IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE:

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL EST. COST	COST OF AMT RECVD
FIRST AID FLD DRESSING	11,775	11,775
BODY ARMOR	33,250	33,250
COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT	1,032,125	232,791.20
GENERATORS	33,838	
TEAR GAS GRENADES	29,798	29,798
PROTECTIVE MASKS	318,884	196,812.98
TRUCK, AMBULANCE	373,325	
PROTECTIVE MASKS	26,352	5,153.26
RADIOS & BATTERIES	403,456	198,395.28
TOTAL	32,256,724	$515,585.72

THE $151,097.63 IN DELIVERED GOODS NOT ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE ABOVE TABLE REPRESENTS A SHIPMENT OF LITTERS (FOR AMBULANCES), RADIOS, GAS MASKS, AND GENERATORS WHICH HAS JUST ENTERED THE COUNTRY AND FOR WHICH WE DO NOT YET HAVE AN ACCURATE BREAKDOWN BY VALUES. EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE THE TIMETABLE FOR FUTURE COMMITMENTS OR DELIVERIES.

2. EMBASSY RECOMMMENDS THAT THE REMAINDER OF THE QUESTIONS BE ANSWERED ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:
A CONSISTENT PATTERN OF VIOLENCE HAS EXISTED IN EL SALVADOR FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND CONTINUES TO EXIST. EXTREMISTS OF THE LEFT, WHOSE DESIRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE HAS BEEN PERVERTED INTO A BLIND STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL POWER, ROUTINELY ENGAGE IN ASSASSINATIONS, ACTS OF TERRORISM, AND ARMED CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES. EXTREMISTS OF THE RIGHT, MOTIVATED BY A WISH TO RETAIN THEIR PRIVILEGED POSITION OR A FANATICAL ANTI-COMMUNISM, REGULARLY COMMIT MURDER, SOMETIMES WITH TORTURE, AND OFTEN INDULGE IN OTHER ACTS OF TERRORISM. EMBASSY HAS NO DOUBT BUT THAT SOME OF THE LATTER HOLD JOBS IN THE MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES. IN THE MIDDLE ARE THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR, MOST OF WHOM WANT LITTLE MORE THAN THE CHANCE TO LIVE AND WORK IN PEACE, UNHINDERED BY ANY POLITICAL SCHEME OF ANY KIND.
NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHY SALVADORANS KILL EACH OTHER WITH SO LITTLE COMPUNCTION, NOT ONLY OVER POLITICAL MATTERS, BUT ON A WIDE VARIETY OF OCCASIONS. PROBABLY IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THEIR HERITAGE. WITH THE PARTIAL EXCEPTION OF THOSE BORN DURING THE LAST YEAR, EVERY SALVADORAN HAS SEENT MOST OF HIS OR HER LIFE UNDER AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM BASED ON FEUDALISM, AND A POLITICAL SYSTEM BASED ON REPRESSION. FOOD, HOPE, AND HUMAN DIGNITY WERE ALL IN SHORT SUPPLY.
ON OCT 15 OF LAST YEAR, A GROUP OF MILITARY OFFICERS TRIED TO CHANGE THAT STATE OF AFFAIRS. THEY OVERTHREW THE ROMERO REGIME AND INSTALLED A GOVERNMENT BASED ON A COALITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES. TWO AND A HALF MONTHS LATER THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT THIS EXPERIMENT FAILED, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE ITS PARTICIPANTS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THE SOCIAL PATTERNS OF DECADES CANNOT BE CHANGED QUICKLY, AND THAT THE POWERS THAT BE IN ANY SOCIETY CAN ONLY BE DEPOSED BY A SLOW CHIPPING AWAY AT THEIR INFLUENCE, OR BY PHYSICAL ELIMINATION. THE CIVILIANS IN THAT CABINET WERE PREPARED FOR NEITHER ALTERNATIVE, SO THEY RESIGNED.
THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE IN JAN 1980. IT HAS INSTITUTED CERTAIN VERY IMPORTANT REFORMS AND IT HAS PLANS FOR OTHERS. IT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PUT A STOP TO EITHER LEFTIST OR RIGHTIST VIOLENCE, INCLUDING THAT WHICH COMES FROM WITHIN ITS OWN RANKS. THE CAMPESINO AND LABOR GROUPS WITH WHICH THE EMBASSY HAS HAD CONTACT ALL AGREE THAT THE VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH THE AUTHORITIES ORIGINATES FROM LOW RANKING MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT, THE MILITARY. THESE KILLINGS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL ARE PARTLY A PATTERN OF ATROCITY AND COUNTER-ATROCITY COMMITTED DURING THE GRIM AND BITTER STRUGGLE GOING ON IN SOME SECTIONS OF THIS COUNTRY, AND PARTLY TAKE THE FORM OF FAVORS DONE BY A LOCAL COMANDANTE WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE MILITARY, FOR HIS GOOD FRIEND AND THE LANDLORD. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DOING MORE TO STOP THIS VIOLENCE, BUT IT APPARENTLY FEARS TO EXERT ITS AUTHORITY ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND A CHALLENGE TO THAT AUTHORITY. NEVERTHELESS, THE EMBASSY IS CONTINUING TO INSIST TO THE GOES THAT THE PROBLEM OF RIGHTIST VIOLENCE MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE IT TEARS THE COUNTRY APART. IN PART OUR MILITARY AID, BY IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION, IS INTENDED TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR HIGH RANKING OFFICERS TO CONTROL THE ACTIONS OF THEIR SUBORDINATES. THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR IS NOT THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS. WE SUPPORT THE GOES BECAUSE NO ALTERNATIVE TO IT COULD CONSOLIDATE ITS POWER WITHOUT KILLING TENS OF THOUSANDS, AND POSSIBLY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS, OF ITS ENEMIES, AND BECAUSE WE SEE SIGNS, PARTICULARLY IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS, THAT THE MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES ARE IMPROVING THEIR CONDUCT, SPECIFICALLY WITH REGARD TO EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE IN CONTROLLING LEFTIST VIOLENCE. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOES WILL PROVIDE EL SALVADOR WITH A GOVERNMENT THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF ITS PEOPLE AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE COST IN HUMAN LIVES.
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